

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00

DRC-01 EUR-25 NIC-01 /164 W
----- 058136

R 061018Z DEC 73 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHCC 8604
INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 15828

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJ: SEIRANKAI'S ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE

REF: TOKYO 15509

SUMMARY: PRESENCE OF FIVE MEMBERS OF SEIRANKAI ON LIST OF 24 NEW PARLIAMENTARY VICE MINISTERS ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 27 RAISES QUESTIONS ANEW CONCERNING ROLE AND CURRENT STATUS OF THIS RADICAL RIGHT-WING GROUP OF YOUNGER LDP DIETMEN. ALTHOUGH FORMED LESS THAN 5 MONTHS AGO, 31-MEMBER SEIRANKAI HAS ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC ATTENTION SINCE ITS FOUNDING FOR ITS BOLD ADVOCACY OF ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE VIEWS, ITS ACTIVISM, AND ITS OUTSPOKEN CRITICISM OF PRIMIN TANAKA'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES. ALTHOUGH SEIRANKAI NOT LIKELY ASSUME PERMANENT ROLE OF INFLUENCE WITHIN LDP OR TO IMPOSE ITS BRAND OF ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE ORTHODOXY ON LDP POLICIES, AS MANIFESTATION OF FERMENT AND UNEASE AMONG CONSERVATIVE PARTY RANK AND FILE IT MAY WELL CONTINUE PLAY INFLUENTIAL PART AS STIMULUS TO LDP EFFORTS TO COPE WITH MASSIVE PROBLEMS NOW FACING IT. END SUMMARY.

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1. AMONG 24 NEWLY-APPOINTED PARLIAMENTARY VICE MINISTERS ANNOUNCED BY GOJ NOVEMBER 27 (REFTEL) FOLLOWING FIVE ARE MEMBERS OF RIGHT-WING "YOUNG TURK" ORGANIZATION WITHIN LDP KNOWN AS SEIRANKAI: ICHIRO NAKAGAWA, 48 (MIZUTA FACTION); MICHIO WATANABE, 50 (NAKASONE FACTION); MOTOHARU MORISHITA, 51 (NAKASONE FACTION); HIDEO UTSUMI, 51 (FUNADA FACTION); AND MASATOSHI KUSUNOKI, 52 (UPPER HOUSE MEMBER, NO FACTIONAL AFFILIATION). INCLUSION OF THIS NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATION KNOWN TO BE STRONGLY CRITICAL OF TANAKA GOVT'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES HAS STIMULATED SPECULATION AS TO REASONS BEHIND APPOINTMENTS.

2. AS IN CASE OF APPOINTMENT OF TANAKA'S ARCH-RIVAL TAKEO FUKUDA TO FINMIN POST, SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT PRIMIN TANAKA'S MAIN MOTIVATION WAS TO STILENCE HIS CRITICS BY GIVING THEM POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND AT SAME TIME MAKING THEM MORE SUBJECT TO HIS DIRECT CONTROL. OTHERS CLAIM THAT TANAKA WAS REWARDING SEIRANKAI FOR POSITIVE ROLE PLAYED BY GROUP IN PUSHING THROUGH DIET EXTENSION THIS SUMMER AND ENABLING GOJ FINALLY TO PASS LONG -DELAYED KEY LEGISLATION.

3. STILL OTHERS, HOWEVER, NOTE THAT NUMBER OF SEIRANKAI MEMBERS ON LIST OF PARLIAMENTARY VICE MINISTERS IS NOT NECESSARILY DISPROPORTIONATE GIVEN RELATIVELY LIMITED NUMBER OF QUALIFIED THIRD - AND FOURTH-TERM DIET MEMBERS (FROM AMONG WHOM PARLIAMENTARY VICE MINISTERS ARE NORMALLY CHOSEN) AND PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF TANAKA'S GENERAL PRECEPTS THIS TIME CALLING FOR SELECTION OF PERSONS OF EXPERIENCE WHO WOULD BE QUALIFIED TO STAND IN FOR SENIOR MINISTERS IN DIET INTERPELLATIONS.

4. WHATEVER FACTORS DETERMINED APPOINTMENTS, FACT THAT 5 SENIOR MEMBERS OF SEIRANKAI NOW OCCUPY SECOND RANKING POSTS IN KEY ECONOMIC MINISTRIES OF FINANCE, AGRICULTURE/FORESTRY, INTERNATIONAL TRADE & INDUSTRY, AND CONSTRUCTION CLEARLY HAS PLACED THIS GROUP IN STRATEGIC POSITION TO EXERT INFLUENCE ON GOJ POLICY AND HAS HEIGHTENED INTEREST IN ITS FUTURE ROLE. HOWEVER, SINCE SEIRANKAI HAS NOT SPELLED OUT ITS POLICY POSITIONS IN MANY SPHERES, NATURE AND EXTENT OF ITS POTENTIAL INFLUENCE IS DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE. IN GENERAL, CONFIDENTIAL

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ITS ROLE TO DATE HAS BEEN LARGELY PROPAGANDISTIC AND THIS ROLE APPEJIS LIKELY TO BE ITS PRINCIPAL ONE. ALTHOUGH IT IS SOMETIMES DESCRIBED AS POLICY STUDY GROUP, ITS ACTIVITIES THUS FAR HAVE NOT INDICATED THAT IT VIEWS PLANNING OF POLICY AS ITS PRINCIPAL OJBECTIVE. IT HAS SOUGHT RATHER TO DRAMATIZE PROTEST MOOD AND SENSE OF CRISIS REGARDING FUTURE OF CONSERVATIVE RULE THAT HAS RECENTLY PERVADED LDP RANSK AND TO COMBAT WHAT IT REGARDS AS LEFTWARD DRIFT OF JAPAN-

ESE POLITICS.

5. OBJECTIVES OF SEIRANKAI HAVE BEEN GENERALLY COUCHED IN TERMS OF RESTORATION OF OLD VALUES. OVERALL GOALS HAVE BEEN TO COUNTER GROWING INFLUENCE OF COMMUNISM AND REVIVE LDP FORTUNES BY RETURNING IT TO "GUEUINE" CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES. AS THEY HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED TO DATE, SOME OF THESE PRINCIPLES SEEM TO HARK BACK TO PRE-WAR PERIOD AND TO REFLECT STRONG ANTI-COMMUNISM AND RADICAL POLITICAL AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK OF ULTRA-CONSERVATIVES OF THAT DAY. THIS ANACHRONISTIC ASPECT OF SEIRANKAI CHAG CTER WAS REFLECTED IN VERY ACT OF FORMING ORGANIZATION WHEN ON JULY 17, 1973, 31 FOUNDING MEMBERS MET IN TOKYO HOTEL AND SWORE LIFE-LONG LOYALTY TO OBJECTIVES OF SOCIETY BY SEALING THEIR SIGNATURES WITH THEIR OWN BLOOD. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES ISSUED BY NEWLY FORMED SOCIETY INCLUDED FOLLOWING GENERAL AIMS: (1) FOREIGN POLICY STRESSING ANTI-COMMUNISM AND PRIMACY OF TIES WITH FREE WORLD NATIONS; (2) EDUCATIONAL POLICY STRESSING EFFORTS TO REVIVE TRADITIONAL MORAL VIRTUES AND COMBAT MATERIALISTIC VALUES THROUGH REFORM OF SCHOOL SYSTEM; (3) SOCIAL POLICY STRESSING MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND ELIMINATION OF "UNEARNED INCOMES"; AND (4) REVISION OF CONSTITUTION ALONG MORE ORTHODOX AND "INDEPENDENT"; LINES TO CLARIFY STATUS OF EMPEROR AND ALSO OF SELF DEFENSE FORCES. ITS FORTHRIGHT ADVOCACY OF THESE VALUES AND OBJECTIVES HAS EARNED FOR SEIRANKAI MIXED IMAGE AS CHAMPIONS OF REACTIONARY POLITICAL VALUES, HAWKISH DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICIES AND RADICAL SOCIAL REFORMS.

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H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 TRSE-00 OMB-01

EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01 /164 W

----- 050250

R 061018Z DEPU73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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6. IN PRACTICE SINCE ITS FOUNDING SEIRANKAI HAS FUNCTIONED PRINCIPALLY AS GADFLY TO TANAKA GOVT. SHORTLY AFTER FOUNDING OF GROUP, SEIRANKAI LEADERS MET WITH PRIMIN TANAKA AND CRITICIZED HIM FOR HIS SOFTNESS TOWARDS COMMUNISM. THEY CHARGED THAT TANAKA'S EAGERNESS FOR RAPPROCHEMENT WITH PRIC AND FRIENDLY NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION ONLY SERVED TO ENHANCE DOMESTIC PRESTIGE OF JCP AND ASSIST COMMUNIST EFFORTS TO WIN POPULAR SUPPORT AMONG ELECTORATE. SEIRANKAI MEMBERS IN DIET HAVE ASSUMED AGGRESSIVE STANCE TOWARD OPPOSITION PARTIES AND HAVE BEEN IMPATIENT WITH EFFORTS OF LDP LEADERSHIP TO ACCOMMODATE THEM. WHEN IT APPEARED THIS SUMMER THAT DIETSESSION WOULD END BEFORE IMPORTANT DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL BILLS COULD BE PASSED, SEIRANKAI MEMBERS TOOK LEAD IN STIFFENING LDP RESOLVE TO FORCE THROUGH SECOND EXTENSION IN ORDER TO PASS STALLED BILLS. MORE RECENTLY, SEIRANKAI

HAS ENGAGED IN FRONTAL ATTACK ON TANAKA'S DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICY CHARGING HIM WITH FAILURE TO TAKE ADEQUATE STEPS TO STEM INFLATION, CURB PRICE RISES, AND CONTROL SPECULATION.
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IN HIGHLY PUBLICIZED ENCOUNTER NOVEMBER 13, SEIRANKAI MEMBERS MET WITH PRIMIN AT LATTERS RESIDENCE TO DISCUSS MOUNTING CONSUMER PRICES. MEETING REPORTEDLY TURNED INTO SHOUTING MATCH AS BOTH SIDES LOST TEMPER. SEIRANKAI HAS ALSO BEEN THORN IN SIDE OF TANAKA GOVT IN FOREIGN POLICY FIELD SINCE ORGANIZATION HAS TAKEN STRONG PRO-TAIWAN AND PRO-ROK STANCE AND HAS BEEN OPENLY CRITICAL OF ANY GOJ MOVE TOWARD PEKING OR PYONGYANA THEY FELT JEOPARDIZED INTERESTS OF EITHER TAIPEI OR SEOUL.

7. SEIRANKAI'S CURRENT INFLUENCE AND STANDING WITHIN CONSERVATIVE CAMP IS SOMEWHAT OF AN ENIGMA. ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS, SEIRANKAI IS ESSENTIALLY ADJUNCT OF CONSERVATIVE WING OF LDP WHICH IS SYMPATHETIC TO FUKUDA AND OPPOSED TO TANAKA AND OHIRA, WHOSE FACTIONS HAVE NO MEMBERS IN ORGANIZATION. PRO-TAIWAN AND PRO-ROK ORIENTATION OF PRINCIPAL SEIRANKAI LEADERS HAS BEEN WELL-KNOWN FOR SOME TIME AND IT HAS EVEN BEEN REPORTED THAT PART OF ORGANIZATIONS FUNDING MAY COME FROM THESE FOREIGN SOURCES ALTHOUGH THIS IS FIRMLY DENIED. SEIRANKAI'S TIES WITH BUSINESS ESTABLISH-

MENT DO NOT APPEAR THUS FAR TO BE VERY EXTENSIVE. SUCH TIES MAY BE INHIBITED BY SEIRANKAI'S PROFESSED OPPOSITION TO MONEY-ORIENTED POLITICS AND BUSINESS WORLD'S SUSPICION OF SEIRANKAI'S RADICALISM AND APPARENT HOSTILITY TO FREE ENTERPRISE AND CAPITALIST PROFIT SYSTEM. THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS THAT WHILE YOUNGER BUSINESS LEADERS (SUCH AS AKIO MORITA OF SONY CORP.) ORIGINALLY SUPPORTED SEIRANKAI AS PROMISING FORCE TO REVITALIZE CONSERVATIVE CAUSE, THEY ARE NOW LESS IMPRESSED WITH ITS PERFORMANCE AND PROSPECTS AND ARE LOOKING ELSEWHERE.

C. GIVEN ITS SHORT TRACK RECORD IN POLITICAL SYSTEM DEEPLY CHARACTERIZED BY TRADITIONALISM OF LEADERS AND WAYS OF DOING THINGS, IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER SEIRANKAI WILL ASSUME PERMANENT ROLE OF INFLUENCE WITHIN LDP. LACK OF SIGNS TO DATE THAT IT IS ATTRACTING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM YOUNGER LDP MEMBERS, STRONG OPPOSITION FROM SENIOR PARTY LEADERSHIP, AND LACK OF ANY EVIDENCE THAT IT HAS DEVELOPED SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL BACKING SUGGEST THAT POSSIBILITY OF SEIRANKAI DEVELOPING INTO NEW INDEPENDENT FACTION IN NEAR FUTURE IS VIRTUALLY NIL. HENCE, IT SEEMS TO US UNLIKELY

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THAT SEIRANKAI AS COHESIVE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION WILL LIVE BEYOND FAIRLY TRANSITORY PURPOSES WHICH THEY HAVE SET OUT TO SERVE. IN ATTRACTING ATTENTION TO NEED FOR REFORM WITHIN LDP, HOWEVER, SEIRANKAI MEMBERS OBVIOUSLY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE STRUCK RESPONSIVE CHORD, BOTH WITHIN PARTY AND TO SOME EXTENT IN BODY POLITIC AT LARGE. THEREFORE, WHILE ANACHRONISTIC BRAND OF CONSERVATIVE ORTHODOXY WHICH THEY HAVE ESPOUSED SEEMS UNLIKELY TO RECAST LDP POLICIES, SEIRANKAI MAY VERY WELL CONTINUE TO PLAY INFLUENTIAL PART IN STUTTERING EFFORTS OF PARTY TO ROUSE ITSELF TO MEET GARGANTUAN TASK THAT IT FACES OVER NEXT FEW MONTHS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL LEADERS, OPPOSITION PARTIES, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TOKYO15828
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731239/aaaabcvv.tel
Line Count: 262
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TOKYO 15509
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Nov-2001 by smithrj>; APPROVED <19-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEIRANKAI'S ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE
TAGS: PINT, JA, LDP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005